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**Subject:** Weekly Report to the Secretary - May 25, 2017  
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Good Afternoon All,

Please find attached the weekly report to the Secretary. I have attached both the word and Google Doc versions of the reports. If there are any issues, please let me know.

Thanks

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Gareth C. Rees

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Weekly Report to the Secretary 05-25-17

**WEEKLY REPORT TO THE SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**May 25, 2017**

**Office of the Solicitor**

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## **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Acting Assistant Secretary Virginia Johnson and Acting FWS Director Jim Kurth will be in the office all week. On May 31 and June 1, Acting NPS Director Michael Reynolds will be traveling to Cumberland Island National Park with Stan Austin, NPS Southeast Regional Director, to meet with park staff and local stakeholders.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

FWS has met with representatives from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to identify future infrastructure and management capability requirements by CBP on Cabeza Prieta NWR to improve operational success and efficiency. This includes the capability to maintain existing roads, the development and maintenance of new roads, the potential expansion of existing facilities (i.e., Camp Grip), installation of new infrastructure such as IFTs (integrated fixed towers) and LMRs (land mobile radios), and the deployment of mobile surveillance systems. By June 6, CBP will submit their initial request to FWS. Meanwhile, FWS will identify environmentally sensitive areas that Border Patrol should attempt to avoid or mitigate. In July, FWS and CBP will begin discussions on what processes will be necessary to move forward on CBP's proposals including NEPA compliance, compatibility determinations, minimum requirements analyses, etc. and how these processes will be funded. To complicate this, the proposals will likely be inconsistent with the Cabeza Prieta's existing comprehensive conservation plan and will mostly lie within designated wilderness.

On May 24, Yosemite National Park concessioner, Yosemite Hospitality, notified High Sierra Camps' June reservation holders that their reservations for this year are cancelled. The cancellation is due to delays caused by the large snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Visitors will be given the option to re-book for June 2018. This will affect 34 groups with a total of 135 individuals. By June 1, the park and Yosemite Hospitality will make a decision if the High Sierra Camps will open this summer.

## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to Report

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On May 31, FWS will join agencies in Canada, other U.S. federal agencies, Canadian federal agencies, First Nations in Canada, and two federally recognized tribes in the U.S. (the Houlton Band of Maliseets and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs) at an event in Edmundston, Quebec, to sign the St. John Watershed Collaboration Agreement. The non-binding agreement affirms the relationship between these governments to restore sea-run fish species such as shad and herring

through fish passage, habitat restoration, and other ecosystem restoration efforts. No outreach is planned.

On May 31 and June 1, FWS and partners will participate in the first South-Central Monarch Symposium at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. Hosted by Texan By Nature, a nonprofit organization founded by former First Lady Laura Bush, the symposium will highlight research and monitoring, land management practices, and private landowner initiatives that benefit the monarch butterfly. Speakers, scientists, nonprofit organization, conservation organizations, and private citizens will attend. Mrs. Bush will provide the keynote address. In late May, FWS will transmit a report to Congress required by the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act, which describes the collaborative process to establish a non-regulatory program to conserve this important watershed. Outreach is planned.

### **Hot Topics**

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has requested a description of FWS's roles in and administration of our Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funded grant activities including: the award process, oversight, typical uses of grant funds, challenges, and information. On May 19, representatives of the FWS's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program, at the request of Scott Heacock of the Government Accountability Office, described the Service's grant activities via teleconference.

Pending Departmental advisement, through the Secretary, FWS will announce \$1.1 billion in revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Acts to states, territories and District of Columbia. The funding, which supports critical state wildlife conservation and recreation projects throughout the nation, is generated by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, fishing equipment and motorboat fuels paid by the hunting, shooting, boating and angling industries. Outreach through the Department is planned.

Pending Departmental advisement, FWS plans to announce nearly \$15 million in grants to 40 states for projects to support recreational boating through the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. More than \$9 million of this will go to six states (California, Maine, Michigan, South Carolina, Texas and Washington) for competitive grants, and the remaining \$5 million will go to 39 states, commonwealths, territories and the District of Columbia for a smaller, non-competitive grant program. Funding is generated through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund by excise taxes on sport fishing and boating equipment and tackle, motorboat fuels and import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft. Grants, which are matched by funding from project partners, support construction or renovation of tie-ups, utilities, fuel stations, pump-out and dump stations, restrooms and additional sanitary amenities such as laundry and showers for recreational boaters.

FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* draft population assessment reports for the Southern Beaufort Sea and Chukchi-Bering seas populations of polar bear in Alaska and open a 90-day public comment period. Pending clearance by the Department. No outreach is planned.

Pending Departmental advisement, FWS will approve a slate of projects for funding under the Competitive State Wildlife Grants program. The projects focus on “species of greatest conservation need” identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Funds for this program are appropriated annually by Congress. FWS Regional Offices will submit individual grants for DOI approval prior to award. No outreach is planned.

### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

Once cleared, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a Notice of Availability for the second revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake. Target to the *Federal Register* is late May. The high estimated costs associated with this plan might garner some public attention, but recovery plans are non-regulatory and estimated costs represent voluntary actions by diverse public and private partners.

### **Endangered Species Act Listing/Delisting Actions**

In late May or early June, FWS plans to announce that it is reopening the comment period and plans to hold two public hearings on the proposed listing for the Texas hornshell, a mussel located in New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. Outreach is planned.

FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final listing determination for the i'iwi, a Hawaiian bird. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the i'iwi to the *Federal Register* by September 20. Outreach is planned.

## **National Park Service**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

In late May/early June, the NPS anticipates the announcement of the \$1.75 million in available Maritime Heritage project grant funding. These grants will be used for maritime heritage education and preservation projects related to the maritime heritage of the United States. The National Maritime Heritage Act established the National Maritime Heritage Grants Program within the Department of the Interior. The grants program is administered in partnership with the Maritime Administration (MarAd). It provides funding for education and preservation projects designed to preserve historic maritime resources and is funded through a percentage of the proceeds from the sale or scrapping of obsolete vessels of the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF). All grants awarded must be matched on a 1-to-1 basis with non-Federal assets.

In late May/early June, the NPS anticipates the announcement of the \$3,623,162 in available Battlefield Land Acquisition grant funding. Grants will be used to protect 999 acres of Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields in Virginia, Mississippi, New York, West Virginia, and Maryland. The NPS works with private landowners, battlefield friends groups, interested



community groups, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, local, state, and tribal governments and Federal agencies for preservation projects and local acquisition of Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefield land. The NPS is working with the Secretary's office on an event and the communications plan.

In late May/early June, the NPS anticipates the announcement of \$15 million in Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant funding for approximately 25 projects. A total of 51 projects were submitted by states to acquire and develop outdoor recreation spaces. This competitive program supplements the annual Land and Water Conservation Fund apportionment to states by supporting projects for disadvantaged populations in urban areas.

In June, Mojave National Preserve will begin a 60-day public comment period on the Water Resources Plan and draft Environmental Impact Statement (WRP/DEIS). The plan will manage both developed (diverted springs and wildlife guzzlers) and undeveloped water resources in the park. The process is being closely watched by local hunting groups interested in the management of wildlife guzzlers (large basins which catch rainwater and provide a watering source for wildlife and cattle), which are viewed as necessary to maintaining a healthy bighorn sheep population for hunting.

In June, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are expecting to begin a two-year road construction project during the summer seasons along a 1-mile portion of the Generals Highway in Sequoia National Park and the Wolverton Road. Visitors could see up to one-hour delays when traveling through Sequoia National Park en route to the General Sherman Tree - the primary destination in the park. Construction will cease upon winter weather as the project is above 5,000 feet.

On June 2-4, the NPS will co-host a commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Dutch Harbor by Japan in World War II. The event will be held in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, where the NPS has the Aleutian World War II National Historic Site, an affiliated area. The event will honor and acknowledge surviving veterans and Aleut evacuees, and remember those who have passed. An invitation to the Secretary of the Interior is forthcoming; other invitees include the Alaska Congressional Delegation, Governor Walker, Native Corporation and tribal officials, and military leadership.

## **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

On May 25, the Acting Deputy Secretary will be meeting with the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition and Commission.

Indian Affairs leadership and staff will be leading the following listening sessions on E.O. 13792 and E.O. 13871.

#### ***Listening Sessions on E.O. 13792: Interior's Review of National Monuments***

- May 25, 3:15pm-5:00 pm, DoubleTree by Hilton  
1000 NE Multnomah Street Portland, OR 97232
- May 30, 8:30am-12 pm, Northern Hotel  
19 North Broadway Billings, MT 59101
- June 1, 1:00pm-4:00 pm, Phoenix Convention Center  
100 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Phoenix, AZ 85004
- June 12, 3:00pm-5:00 pm, Mohegan Sun  
1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard, Uncasville, CT 06382

#### ***Listening Sessions on E.O. 13871: Reorganization of the Executive Branch***

- May 25, 1:30pm-3:15pm, DoubleTree by Hilton  
1000 NE Multnomah Street Portland, OR 97232
- June 1, 8:30am-12pm, Phoenix Convention Center  
100 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Phoenix, AZ 85004
- June 6, 8:30am-12pm, Mystic Lake Casino & Hotel  
2400 Mystic Lake Blvd NW Prior Lake, MN 55372
- June 8, 8:30 am – 12 pm, Rushmore Civic Center  
444 N. Mt. Rushmore Road Rapid City, SD 57701
- June 12, 1:00 pm – 2:45 pm, Mohegan Sun  
1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard, Uncasville, CT 06382
- June 27, 8:30 am – 12 pm, Tulsa Convention Center  
100 Civic Center Tulsa, OK 74103

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act report that was due to Congress on April 15, 2017 is currently with the Office of the Executive Secretariat for review before the final signature of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. The report reflects the input of consultations and meetings with Tribes, water users, and adjacent irrigation projects.

The BIA Office of Justice Services District II Office continues to gather daily intelligence on the Diamond Pipeline Protest. Currently, there are two active camps in Oklahoma (Oka Lawa and Wealaka camps). All intelligence is being forwarded to the Oklahoma Information Fusion Center

in Oklahoma City, OK. The BIA District II Special Agent in Charge and assigned Intelligence Agent participate in weekly intelligence briefings with the Oklahoma State Fusion Center, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Oklahoma City Police Department, BIA-Office of Justice Services Headquarters, and other law enforcement agencies.

## **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On May 30, the BLM will participate in a tribal listening session regarding E.O. 13792, “Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act,” hosted by the BIA in Billings, MT. The session will allow tribal members the opportunity to provide input on monuments prior to issuance of the Secretary’s interim report to the President on June 15.

On May 31, BLM-MT Acting State Director Jon Raby will attend the annual Montana Association of State Grazing Districts meeting in Great Falls, MT, to provide a brief update on recent BLM activities in the State. The meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the Montana Stockgrowers mid-year meeting and Sen. Daines’ Agricultural Summit.

On May 31 – June 1, to kick off June as Great Outdoors Month, Partners Outdoors 2017 will take place at the South Interior Building. This annual event brings partners from the public and private sectors together to highlight recreation community efforts and showcase innovation. BLM Acting Director Mike Nedd and BLM staff will participate.

On May 31, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will discuss Bureau priorities at an All-Hands Meeting at BSEE’s Sterling office. Director Angelle will discuss these priorities, along with the FY2018 budget request, at a June 1 BSEE media roundtable with Washington, D.C., Louisiana, and trade media organizations.

On June 1, BLM-CO Southwest District Manager Joe Meyer and staff will tour the West Elk Mine, owned by Mountain Coal Company, near Somerset, CO, to observe its longwall coal mining operations in connection with a two pending lease modifications. The lease modifications will add 800 and 922 acres to existing leases and will ensure coal reserves are recovered and not bypassed. The West Elk Mine employs over 300 people and produces 5.1 million tons of coal per year. The USFS has the lead, with the BLM as a cooperating agency, for analysis of the proponent’s request for a coal lease modification adjacent to the existing mine.

On June 1, the BLM will participate in a tribal listening session regarding E.O. 13792, “Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act,” hosted by the BIA in Phoenix, AZ. The session will allow tribal members the opportunity to provide input on monuments prior to issuance of the Secretary’s interim report to the President on June 15.

On June 2, pending approval, BOEM plans to initiate the process of developing a new Five Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Program, with publication of a Request for Information and Comments. Notification letters will also be sent to all 50 Governors and several Federal agencies, as required under section 18 of the OCS Lands Act. This action will be taken

pursuant to the direction provided in the April 28, 2017, Executive Order entitled, “Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy” and Secretary’s Order 3350, issued on May 1, 2017.

On June 3 – August 24, planned Trans-Alaska Pipeline system shutdowns will occur for maintenance and testing of emergency systems. The first 18-hour maintenance shutdown took place on May 6 to isolate the main incoming crude header for cleaning and inspection. Alyeska Pipeline Services Company and BLM-AK’s Branch of Pipeline Monitoring will observe the shutdowns.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

- Who: Office of Wildland Fire (OWF), Director Bryan Rice
- What: National Association of State Foresters Wildland Fire Committee Meeting
- When: May 30-June 1, 2017
- Where: St. Louis, Missouri
- Press: Closed
- Topic: Director Rice will provide an update on fire season readiness, discuss leader's intent, and talk about Cohesive Strategy implementation.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**Border Security Infrastructure.** Borderlands Coordinator Jon Andrew has been working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to coordinate proposed additional security infrastructure on the U.S. Mexico border. Coordination efforts include a review of the need for tribal consultation and possible permitting for preconstruction planning work on DOI lands. Various meetings are being scheduled in the coming weeks.

**Internal Control and Audit Follow-up.** The Department has an annual goal of closing 85% of corrective actions scheduled for closure in FY 2017 to address issues raised in OIG and GAO engagements. As of May 19, 2017, the Department has closed 32% of open audit recommendations scheduled for closure.

**DATA Act Compliance - Inspector General Review.** The Inspector General has requested the Business Integration Office provide an overview of the DATA Act submission process including reconciliation. This review is scheduled for June 1, 2017.

**Secretary's visit to National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), Boise, ID, June 2, 2017.** Secretary Zinke and Secretary Perdue are scheduled to visit the National Interagency Fire Center. Tentatively, the Secretaries will sign the 2017 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership Memorandum, setting forth leaders' intent to improve the way that both agencies manage wildfires by ensuring that all of our firefighting assets are utilized in the most efficient way possible.

**U.S. Department of the Interior Receives an "A+" on the FY 2016 Scorecard.** The Small Business Administration has awarded the U.S. Department of the Interior an "A+" on its annual Small Business Procurement Scorecard. During Fiscal Year 2016, the Department awarded 59.67 percent of its procurement dollars (Federal government goal is 23%) to small business which equates to approximately \$1.8 billion of the approximately \$2.7 billion spent on contracts by the Department. Through the hard work and commitment of program managers, acquisition professionals, and senior officials, DOI excelled in meeting its procurement goals with small business.

**Year 2017 Small Business Accomplishments to Date:** As of May 10, 2017, the Department has awarded 54.04% of its contract award dollars to small businesses. The Department-wide small business goal, which was negotiated with the Small Business Administration (SBA), is 53.5%. The Department awarded 21.45% of its contract award dollars to small disadvantaged businesses and 13.91% of its contract award dollars to women-owned small businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 3.12% of its contract award dollars to historically underutilized business zone small businesses and 3.06% of its contract award dollars to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories.

## Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

### Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Acting AS/WS Scott Cameron will be on AL the week of May 29 and back in the office June 7. Kerry Rae will be in DC all week.

### Week Ahead Announcements and Actions

**May 31: Funding Announced for Cooperative Watershed Management Program and Drought Contingency Planning Funding:** On May 31, dependent on departmental approval, Reclamation will announce the selected funding for Cooperative Watershed Management Program and Drought Contingency Planning. The CWMP provides funding to watershed groups to encourage diverse stakeholders to form local solutions to address their water management needs. Through drought contingency planning, Reclamation provides financial assistance on a competitive basis for applicants to develop a drought contingency plan or to update an existing plan. [UPDATED]

On May 31, USGS will announce a new Open-File Report that determines there were 28 species of cyanobacterium present during a 2016 harmful algal bloom (HAB) event in Lake Okeechobee, Florida. An extensive harmful algal bloom grew in Lake Okeechobee, the St. Lucie Canal and River and the Caloosahatchee River in Florida in 2016. In addition to the very visible bloom of the cyanobacterium *Microcystis aeruginosa*, this study identified several other cyanobacteria present in the HAB. These other species, though less conspicuous, have the potential to create a variety of toxins in addition to those commonly associated with microcystis. The report will be available from the USGS website and a news release is planned.

Around June 1, USGS will release *The USGS Integrated Drought Science Plan* which represents a coordinated, in-depth path forward toward better understanding drought impacts to advance critical information necessary for decision-makers to strengthen long-term drought resilience in the coming decades. Drought poses a serious threat to the resilience of people, infrastructure, and ecosystems in the United States. The USGS identified drought-related research and our scientific capabilities to develop a coordinated multi-discipline science approach that brings the full USGS capacity to bear on this national crisis. Ultimately, this approach will help our Nation prepare for and cope with drought to protect people, infrastructure, the economy, and national security. The plan will be available on the USGS website and a technical release is planned.

**June 6: Reclamation to Launch New Prize Competition:** On June 6, Reclamation will launch a prize competition for developing corrosion protection of infrastructure. The prize competition invites problem solvers to develop new or improved methods and applications. This competition will look at developing long-term corrosion protection of hydraulic steel structures in the field. A video describing the competition is prepared and will be used in the launch.



## 30-60 DAY LOOK-AHEAD

### Office of the Solicitor

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### U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service

#### Asian Carp

In June, FWS plans to send the 2016 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) report to Congress. WRRDA includes direction from Congress to FWS to lead a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins, in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. Specifically, WRRDA calls for FWS to develop and deliver a report to Congress summarizing all activities and expenditures (both federal and non-federal) related to Asian carp prevention efforts in the two watersheds, as well as describing any observed changes in the range of Asian carp in Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins. Notable changes from the 2015 report include updates on a slight range expansion of silver carp, the movement of juvenile Asian carps in the sub-basins and additional information on the status of black carp. As

in previous years, the 2016 report will be made available to the public on AsianCarp.us. The report also outlines research that could improve the ability to control the spread of Asian carp and quantitative measures proposed for use in documenting progress in controlling the spread of Asian carp. Potentially controversial due to the slight range expansion of silver carp. No public outreach is planned; outreach to Congress will be conducted.

### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

In early June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice designating two areas in northwest Oregon as nonessential experimental population areas for the reintroduction of Oregon silverspot butterflies.

On June 7, FWS plans to formally recognize Fort Hood as the recipient of FWS's Military Conservation Partner Award. FWS presents this award annually to a military installation whose efforts represent significant conservation accomplishments achieved in partnership with FWS and other conservation agencies. The U.S. Army Garrison Fort Hood Military Installation encompasses 218,824 acres in Bell and Coryell counties in Texas. Fort Hood is one of the Army's premier installations, encompassing the largest area of any installation in the continental United States. It conducts the full range of mission-related training activities and also manages the largest known populations of the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. Outreach is planned. The ceremony is open to media.

On June 15, FWS anticipates announcing the availability of the Mexican Wolf Draft Recovery Plan, First Revision (draft recovery plan). The Mexican wolf is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The draft recovery plan includes specific recovery criteria to be met to enable FWS to remove this species from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. FWS will seek review and comment on the revised plan from local, state and federal agencies; tribes; and the public, in both the United States and Mexico. Of significant Congressional interest. FWS will provide advance notification to Members prior to announcing availability of the recovery plan. FWS will host public meeting on the updated Mexican wolf recovery plan in late July.

In late June, FWS will publish a notice of intent to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement and initiate scoping related to the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan. In July, following publication of this notice, the Service will host four public scoping meetings in central Oregon to gather information for the NEPA analysis. The Deschutes Basin Board of Control and the city of Prineville are developing the plan to mitigate for the incidental take of three listed species – Oregon spotted frog, bull trout, and steelhead – resulting from operations of eight central Oregon irrigation districts. Media expected. While there are controversial issues with development of the habitat conservation plan, the notice and initiation of scoping is not expected to be controversial in itself.

In early July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice announcing the availability of a draft post-delisting monitoring plan for the proposed delisting of gypsum wild-buckwheat for public review and comment. It will be finalized in concert with the decision on the final delisting rule in January 2018.

In early July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice announcing the availability of a draft post-delisting monitoring plan for the proposed delisting of lesser long-nosed bat for public review and comment. It will be finalized in concert with the decision on the final delisting rule in January 2018.

In early July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice announcing the availability of a draft post-delisting monitoring plan for the proposed delisting of black-capped vireo plan for public review and comment. It will be finalized in concert with the decision on the final delisting rule in January 2018.

### **Endangered Species Act Listing/Delisting Actions**

In early June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the bureau's March 11, 2016, proposal to identify the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) grizzly bear population of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming as a distinct population segment (DPS) and revise the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife by removing grizzly bears within the GYE DPS due to recovery. Outreach is planned.

In June, FWS expects to publish a notice announcing consideration of a draft Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA), draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), and draft environmental assessment for the Texas hornshell (proposed for listing) and other covered species (Rio Grande River cooter, gray redbreast, blue sucker and Pecos springsnail), and an enhancement of survival permit application under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) submitted by the Center of Excellence. The covered area would include portions of Eddy County, New Mexico, and Culberson County, Texas.

In early June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to remove the Hualapai Mexican vole, located in Arizona, from the list of endangered and threatened species due to the fact that the original taxonomic classification is no longer appropriate. Outreach is planned. In mid-June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding on a petition to list the San Felipe gambusia, a Texas fish. Outreach is planned.

In late June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* 12-month findings on petitions to list Kirtland's snake and the Mohave shoulderband snail. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the Mohave shoulderband snail to the *Federal Register* by June 30 and the finding for Kirtland's snake to the *Federal Register* by September 30. Outreach is planned. In early July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding and proposed delisting determination on the Deseret milkvetch, found in Utah. Outreach is planned.

FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice to reopen the comment period on proposed rules to list and designate critical habitat for the Guadalupe fescue, downlist the Tobusch fishhook cactus from endangered to threatened, downlist the Kuenzler hedgehog cactus from endangered to threatened, and delist gypsum wild-buckwheat. Stakeholder outreach is planned. The package is pending clearance by the Department.

### **Migratory Bird Management Actions**

Within the next 30-60 days, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* its annual proposal for administering tribal hunting, fishing, and gathering rights under multiple treaties for several federally recognized tribes in the Great Lakes region. The proposal has been compiled in consultation with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, which represents 11 tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. FWS has informed the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan DNRs of the agency's support for these proposed regulations. A final decision will not be made until after public comments are reviewed and would not take effect until the fall 2017 hunting season. The proposal is expected to be controversial due to the inclusion of several new techniques for tribal members to take waterfowl. No outreach is planned.

Through the Department, FWS will announce the approval of around \$4 million in grants for 32 projects throughout the Americas as part of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant program. Exact date and award amount are not yet determined. Outreach through the Department is planned.

## **Energy**

FWS has concluded formal consultation with the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission (FERC) on the relicensing of the Loup River Hydroelectric Project in Nebraska. The Project is located on the Loup and Platte Rivers and diverts water from the Loup River into a power canal and then discharges it into the Platte River. Consultation began in 2008 and culminated with a final biological Opinion (Opinion) in December 2016. Species consulted upon include the endangered pallid sturgeon, endangered interior least tern and threatened piping plover. FERC accepted the opinion without objection as it was based on the information provided in the final Environmental Assessment, and FERC is currently in the process of issuing a final license. The applicant, Loup Power District (LPD), provided comments on the opinion and believes it to be restrictive on future operations. In January 2017, LPD wrote a letter to the FWS, FERC, DOI, Congressional members, and the Nebraska governor expressing its concerns about the opinion. On May 16, the FWS sent a response letter that does not accurately convey the tone the Secretary has established to LPD. The letter had NOT been cleared by the FWS/FWP policy staff who had already opened a dialogue with the applicant in April to look for a collaborative path forward. Direction has been provided to both HQ and regional FWS leadership to engage LPD expeditiously and resolve concerns appropriately.

## **National Park Service**

In mid-June, when the Half Dome Cables are in place, Yosemite National Park is increasing the permit fees to hike to the summit of Half Dome. The nominal fee increase is due to the increased fees associated with the national bridge contract and passing these fees to the users. Public notification of the fee increase will be announced via a news release, and the cables are expected to go up later than usual this year due to the heavy snowpack.

In July, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park fire assessment review will be released. In February, a team of fire experts (federal and state) convened at Great Smoky Mountains National Park to conduct an independent review of the 2016 Chimney Tops 2 fire that started in the park

on November 23. The purpose of the review is to assess the facts leading up to and during the Chimney Tops 2 fire within the boundaries of the park, as well as make recommendations on any planning, operational, or managerial issues which can be addressed locally, regionally, and/or nationally to reduce the chances of a similar incident in the future. The NPS has received tort claims related to this incident and expects additional lawsuits soon.

### **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

On May 24 – 26, BIA's Division of Energy and Mineral Development staff will meet with representatives of the Crow Nation. The primary purpose of the visit is to hold a kick-off meeting for Crow Nation's solar and biomass projects. The team will also discuss other tribal energy projects such as the hydro-electrification of the Yellowtail Dam Afterbay.

On May 25, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Mid-Year Conference will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Portland, OR.

On June 5-9, BIA's Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) will be hosting their first 2017 National Realty Training at the National Indian Programs Training Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Training is open to BIA and Tribal (638 and Self-Gov) field realty staff.

On June 12-15, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 2017 Mid-Year Conference and Marketplace will take place at the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, CT.

On July 25-27, Tribal/Interior Budget Council meetings will take place at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort (22181 Resort Boulevard, Flagstaff, AZ 86004).

### **Items of Note/Expected Legislative, Legal, Policy Issues**

#### ***Regulations Ready for OS Review***

- None at this time.

#### ***Regulations Pending IA Transition Team Review, Then Ready for AS-IA Signature***

- **Proposed rules pending publication:**
  - **Indian Electric Power Utilities (25 CFR 175):** This proposed rule would not make any substantive changes to the regulations, but would revise the regulations to be in plain language. The regulations affect only a limited number of Tribes because there are only three BIA electric power utilities: Colorado River (serving the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation), Mission Valley Power (serving the Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Indian Reservation), and San Carlos Irrigation Project (serving Gila River Indian Community).
    - *Status:* [No Change] The proposed rule will be presented to the AS-IA transition contact in preparation for AS-IA signature.

#### ***Federal Register Notices Ready for OS Review***

- **Advisory Board for Exceptional Children:** The request for nominations of individuals to serve on the Advisory Board is ready for OS review. As of September 2017, there will be eight slots available; members serve staggered two-year terms. The notice of an upcoming meeting of the Advisory Board has been withdrawn in accordance with the May 5, 2017, memorandum directing postponement of meetings until September 2017.
- **Trust Acquisitions for Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, and Wilton Rancheria:** Five Federal Register notices announcing trust acquisitions that were finalized in the last Administration are pending approval for publication. The Department's regulations require publication of notice of the acquisitions in the Federal Register.
- **Paperwork Reduction Act notices:**
  - Renewal of Agency Information Collection for Home-Living Programs and School Closure and Consolidation (60-day notice)
  - Renewal of Agency Information Collection for Application for Job Placement and Training Services (60-day notice)
  - Renewal of Agency Information Collection for Tribal Energy Development Capacity Program (60-day notice)
- **Draft Programmatic EIS for the 2015 Integrated Resource Management Plan for the Colville Indian Reservation, Nespelem, Washington:** This notice announces the availability of the draft programmatic environmental impact statement for public review and comment.

#### *Federal Register Notices Ready for AS-IA Signature*

- **Liquor Control Ordinances: Pueblo of Santa Clara:** This notice announces that BIA certifies that the Tribe has amended its liquor control ordinance.

#### *Upcoming FACA Committee Notices*

- **BIE Negotiated Rulemaking on Accountability (25 CFR 30):** The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires BIE to use a negotiated rulemaking process to develop regulations for implementation no later than the 2017-2018 academic year and to define the standards, assessments, and accountability system consistent with Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the schools funded by BIE on a national, regional, or tribal basis.
  - *Status:* [No Change] BIE is preparing a new notice of intent to establish the committee and solicitation for membership.

#### *Policy & Procedures*

- Pending AS-IA
  - 3 IAM 4: Delegation of Authority – Director, BIA to Deputy Bureau Director, Field Operations and to Regional Organizational Levels to include the changes to delegation in the Acting ASIA memo issued April 6, 2017, regarding Off-

#### Reservation Fee-to-Trust Decisions

- 18 IAM 5: Directives System to include necessary updates regarding the functions of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA)

### **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

In early June, OSMRE and BLM anticipate publishing a Notice of Availability for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the King II Coal Lease Modification, initiating a 30-day comment period. OSMRE and BLM are co-leads in analyzing the proposed lease modification. The mine, which is located in Hesperus, CO, is operated by Grupo Cementos de Chihuahua (GCC Energy) of Mexico and employs 120 employees and subcontractors and would entail a 952-acre expansion.

In early June, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will conduct Capitol Hill visits with majority and minority staff for relevant Congressional committees and offices. Office calls with certain individual members may also be scheduled.

During the week of June 5, OSMRE anticipates publishing a Notice of Availability for the Bridger Mine Mining Plan Modification Draft EA, initiating a 30-day comment period. The Bridger Mine is an underground mine located in Sweetwater County, WY that employs 540 people. If the modification is approved, production is estimated to be 2.24 million tons per year.

On June 6, BLM-AK State Director Bud Cribley will present an update on the status of the environmental cleanup at the Red Devil Mine in southwest AK to the Orutsarmiut Native Council in Bethel, AK.

On June 7, BLM-MT Acting State Director Jon Raby will attend the annual Governor's Fire Season Briefing in Missoula, MT. Hosted by the State, the briefing will also include representatives from the USFWS, BIA, USFS, and rural fire departments.

On June 7, the BLM implementation lead for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, Russell Scofield, will present an update at the annual Mojave Commanders' Summit at Edwards Air Force Base. Military commanders and staff from the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, Navy Region Southwest, Fort Irwin, Edwards Air Force Base, and Twenty Nine Palms Marine Corps Base will attend.

On June 7, BSEE officials will meet with representatives and counsel of Taylor Energy in New Orleans to discuss the current status of ongoing negotiations regarding disposition of the Taylor MC-20 site.

On June 7, BSEE staff from the Houston and Gulf of Mexico offices will attend the Offshore Operators Committee (OOC) held at the Anadarko corporate office in Houston, TX. The OOC consists of representatives from offshore oil and gas companies and serves as the industry's principal representative on matters related to the regulation of Gulf of Mexico offshore operations.

On June 8, BLM-CO will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 86 parcels totaling 73,288 acres in Jackson, Routt, Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties. BLM-CO removed 20 parcels in Grand County from its original parcel list due to low energy potential and reduced industry interest in the geographic area, as well as concern from local government and the public regarding impacts to water resources. Bidding is not expected to be robust.

On June 8, BLM-NM will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 18 parcels totaling 4,376 acres in Roger Mills, Ellis, Canadian, and Major Counties, OK; and Live Oak, McMullen, Washington, Burleson, and Jackson Counties, TX. This sale may be controversial as BLM received 26 protests from homeowners adjacent to Lake Somerville, TX, regarding potential impacts to water quality. Bidding is not expected to be robust.

On June 8 – 9, BLM-NV Elko District Office staff will host a booth at the annual Elko Mining Expo, which attracts an estimated 10,000 attendees and more than 400 vendors around the world. Staff will answer questions about mining and minerals, recreation, invasive weeds, and the wild horse and burro program.

On June 9, BLM anticipates circulating for BLM and Department review the draft Venting & Flaring Interim Rule and supporting documents. The interim rule delays implantation of the final rule by 18 months which, in accordance with S.O. 3349, was reviewed and determined by the BLM to not be fully consistent with the President’s Executive Order “Promoting Energy Dependence and Economic Growth”.

On June 11 - 14, BLM’s Wild Horse and Burro Program Division Chief Dean Bolstad will present updates on the program at the American Horse Council annual conference in Washington, DC.

On June 12, the BLM will participate in a tribal listening session regarding E.O. 13792 hosted by the BIA in Uncasville, CT. The session, which is being held in conjunction with the National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year Conference, will allow tribal members the opportunity to provide input on Antiquities Act monuments prior to issuance of the Secretary’s interim report to the President on June 15.

During the week of June 12, OSMRE plans to publish a Notice of Availability for the Cordero Rojo Mine Mining Plan Modification Draft EA, initiating a 30-day public comment period. Cloud Peak Energy’s Cordero Rojo Mine is a surface mine located in Campbell County, WY. The mine employs 383 people and produces approximately 20 million tons of coal per year.

On June 12 – 16, Acting BLM-MT State Director Jon Raby plans to conduct courtesy visits with members and staff of the MT, ND and SD delegations in Washington, DC to discuss public land issues, including energy development, pipelines, grazing and rangeland, mining, and fire management.

On June 13, BLM-MT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 156 parcels totaling 69,056 acres in Custer, Garfield, Fallon, Carter, Rosebud, Big Horn, and Powder River Counties. All of the parcels are located in the Miles City area. The sale is not expected to be controversial. The



bidding is not expected to be particularly robust.

On June 13, BLM-UT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 20 parcels covering 23,733 acres in Sevier, Piute, Garfield, and Sanpete Counties. While approximately half of the parcels are within Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas, the sale is not expected to be controversial. The bidding may be robust on a few parcels that are located close to a producing field.

On June 14, BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 106 parcels totaling 195,732 acres in Nye, Eureka, and Lander Counties. The sale is expected to be controversial based on public reaction to the lease Environmental Assessment, which included concerns regarding the proximity of the parcels to wetland areas and cultural sites. Bidding has the potential to be robust.

On June 15, BLM plans to publish in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the West Antelope 3 Lease-by-Application for approximately 3,508.31 acres (containing approximately 441 million tons of in-place coal). The acreage is a tract of Federal coal adjacent to the Antelope Mine in Campbell and Converse counties, WY, and is necessary to maintain production at the existing mine. The notice will also announce the date of a public scoping meeting to be held in Wright, WY.

On June 15, BOEM plans to hold a New York Offshore Renewable Energy Intergovernmental Task Force meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the status of current offshore renewable energy leases, receive lessee updates on future activities, and discuss the new unsolicited lease requests offshore Massachusetts and New York.

In mid-June, BOEM, through its contractor, plans to conduct detailed geological surveys of specific areas off two Mid-Atlantic States. These surveys, coupled with already-underway geophysical surveys, are being conducted to determine potential volumes and the extent of new sand resources. This is a continuation of work initiated for the Atlantic Sand Assessment Project following Hurricane Sandy to identify new potential sand resources for future beach and coastal protection and restoration projects.

On June 19, BLM plans to publish in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplemental EIS for the Mont Hope Project, a new molybdenum mine, in Eureka County, NV. The project encompasses approximately 8,355 acres of new surface disturbance, 8,092 of which are on public lands administered by the BLM. The Supplemental EIS is being prepared following a decision by the Ninth Circuit finding the justification for air quality analysis insufficient. The SEIS will also supplement the analysis of public water reserves.

On June 20 or June 27, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee tentatively plans to hold a hearing on “Federal/State partnerships to Restore Landscapes.” A BLM witness, yet to be determined, will testify.

On June 21, BOEM plans to hold Lease Sale 244 in Cook Inlet, AK. The lease sale will offer 224 blocks, consisting of approximately 1.09 million acres. Though turnouts for lease sales in

the Cook Inlet historically have been lower than other areas on the OCS, the Bureau believes that there is potential to receive bids for this sale.

On June 21, BLM plans to hold an auction of Federally-owned crude helium. Under the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, the BLM must offer for auction and sale annually a portion of the helium reserves stored underground at the Cliffside Gas Field, near Amarillo, Texas. The BLM anticipates auctioning 500 MMcf in a total of 30 lots for delivery in FY 2018. Following the auction, the BLM will offer an allocated sale in which helium is offered to refiners, and a non-allocated sale in which the helium is offered to non-refiners.

In early summer, BOEM plans to publish a final rule to address the use of OCS sand, gravel, and shell resources for shore protection, beach restoration, or coastal wetlands restoration projects by Federal, state, and local government agencies for construction projects authorized by or funded in whole or part by the Federal Government. The rule will describe the negotiated noncompetitive agreement process and codify new and existing procedures.

On June 22, BLM-Eastern States (ES) will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 2 parcels totaling 160 acres in AR. Bidding is not expected to be robust, and the sale is not expected to be controversial.

On June 22, BLM-WY will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 26 parcels totaling 31,975 acres in Laramie, Carbon, Sweetwater, Sublette, and Uinta Counties. Bidding is not expected to be robust, and the sale is not expected to be controversial.

On June 22, BLM and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest staff will hold a public scoping meeting on a 20-year mineral withdrawal proposal by the USFS for approximately 340,000 acres of land in the upper Methow River drainage in Washington State. Currently, there are pre-existing mining claims in this area and valid existing rights will be honored. The proposed action will withdraw these lands from settlement, sale, location, and entry for a period of 20 years while Congress considers legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Murray and Cantwell to permanently withdraw the areas.

On June 22 - 25, BLM-AK will partner with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing to host an annual fly-fishing event for wounded veterans in the Delta Wild and Scenic River corridor.

On June 23, BLM-OR's Myrtlewood Field Office will hold the Crystal Clear Timber Sale (116 acres; 5,605 mbf) and First Floras Timber Sale (25 acres; 1,295 mbf). These sales may be controversial due to ongoing conflicts between conservation interests and the logging/timber industry.

On June 26, four individuals charged with various crimes during the 2014 Gold Butte cattle impoundment are scheduled to be re-tried following the declaration of a mistrial on April 24, 2017. BLM-NV communications are being coordinated with BLM-WO and the Department of Justice.

On June 26 - 30, BLM-CA State Director Jerry Perez plans to conduct courtesy visits with

members and staff of the CA Congressional delegation in Washington, DC to discuss public land management issues, including oil and gas development, planning efforts, wildfire, renewable energy, and recreation.

On June 28, BSEE will hold a workshop with NASA on Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA). NASA will introduce its guide to PRA to industry stakeholders and solicit input on its potential application to offshore oil and gas projects.

In late-June/early July, BLM plans to issue the Boardman to Hemingway Record of Decision. On February 28, BLM received the Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service. BLM-OR land use plan amendments are being handled concurrently and the decision will be issued simultaneously with the ROD for the EIS and approval to issue a right-of-way grant. The ROD will be set up for ASLM approval and will be submitted in advance for review.

On July 7, BOEM will publish a Notice of Availability of the Final Supplemental EIS for the Cape Wind Project. This EIS will supplement the 2009 Final EIS and is being prepared pursuant to a remand order from the D.C. Circuit Court. Publication of the Record of Decision for the project is planned for August 11.

In mid-July, OSMRE Western Region plans to publish a Notice of Availability for the John Henry Mine Mining Plan Modification draft EA and unsigned FONSI, initiating a 30-day public comment period. Pacific Coast Coal Company's John Henry Mine is a surface mine located in King County, Washington.

On July 13, the BLM-AK Glennallen Field Office will begin issuing permits for the 2017 - 2018 Unit 13 Federal subsistence moose and caribou hunting seasons. The BLM issues nearly 3,500 Federal subsistence permits annually and provides permitting opportunities to rural residents in Delta Junction, Cantwell, Slana, and Glennallen. Federal subsistence hunting maps, answers to frequently asked questions, and subsistence education materials and links are updated annually, and available at the BLM Glennallen Field Office.

On July 17, BOEM plans to publish the Final Notice of Sale and Record of Decision for GOM Lease Sale 249. The sale is scheduled for August 16 and will be the first lease sale under the 2017-2022 OCS Oil & Gas Program as well as the first region-wide sale.

On August 3, BLM-NV Las Vegas Field Office will hold the spring land sale under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) in Las Vegas. The BLM proposes to offer 81.25 acres of public land in 17 parcels for competitive sale. In accordance with SNPLMA, funds generated by this proposed sale will be used for projects such as the development of parks, trails, and natural areas, capital improvements on Federal lands, acquisition of environmentally sensitive land, and Lake Tahoe restoration projects. Five percent of the sale revenue will be directed to the State of Nevada General Education Fund and ten percent to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

**New Interagency Borderlands Coordinator.** On June 11, 2017, Brent Range, Superintendent at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, will begin work as the Interagency Borderlands Coordinator. Transition meetings will be scheduled for locations along the border with key leadership and staff later this month and in June.

**Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) and World Oceans Day, June 13–15, 2017.** Capitol Hill Ocean Week, hosted by the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation, will be held in Washington, DC. PPA and the DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team are coordinating DOI's participation in CHOW. World Oceans Day is on June 8, 2017 and June has also historically been proclaimed as National Oceans Month.

**Columbia River Treaty (CRT) Collaborative Modeling Workshop, Vancouver, Canada, June 16, 2017.** Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and US Geological Survey (USGS) will attend and participate in this workshop in Vancouver. The modeling workshop was established by the State Department and Canada's Global Affairs to conduct technical modeling of alternative operations of CRT reservoirs, and the resulting operational changes to Canadian and U.S. reservoirs. This information is anticipated to be able to support the negotiations between the United States and Canada to modernize the Columbia River Treaty when those formal negotiations are approved to begin. Participants include representatives from state, federal, and tribal government agencies, as well as from the Public Utility Districts which operate dams and reservoirs on the Columbia River and are directly affected by the CRT.

**Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), June 15, 2017.** The Wildland Fire Leadership Council in-person meeting was cancelled. DAS-PRE Humbert and Director Rice will participate in the one hour conference call.

**Eagle Horizon Exercise, Site C, June 21, 2017.** The entire Department of the Interior COOP team will participation in the interagency Continuity of Operations (COOP) Exercise EAGLE HORIZON 17 (EH-17) to provide incoming senior leadership insight into the operational aspects of the Department's COOP and Devolution plans, to include the functionality of the Department's alternate sites, and a review of the Department's Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs), Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) and Essential Supporting Activities (ESAs) which are the primary focus during catastrophic emergencies.

**41st Annual National Indian Timber Symposium, Yakima, Washington, June 25-29, 2017.** DAS-PRE Humbert and Office of Wildland Fire Director will be attending this symposium. Director Rice will speak on two panels on June 26 and 27 and DAS-PRE Humbert will provide the DOI Wildland Fire Update on June 29.

**Border Security.** A leadership meeting on southwest border security and environmental protection is now expected to take place in September 2017 (date TBD) in Tucson, AZ. Planning for possible border security is expected to be the main focus of the meeting. Senior officials at DOI, CBP, U.S. Border Patrol and USDA Forest Service are expected to attend.

#### **New Government Accountability Office (GAO) Audits**

**Implementation of the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) (Job Code 101338).**

The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act (TFTEA) of 2015 requires GAO to review implementation of ACE by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and other Federal agencies that work with CBP to enforce U.S. customs and trade laws. GAO will review: (1) to what extent Federal agencies other than CBP are accessing and utilizing ACE; and (2) potential cost savings and trade law enforcement benefits that may result from implementation of the elements identified in TFTEA. The entrance conference with the Fish and Wildlife Service is not scheduled.

### **GAO Entrance Conferences**

**San Francisco Bay Watershed Restoration Efforts (Job Code 101963) – May 26, 2017, with FWS, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Staff.** Per request from the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, GAO plans to review: (1) San Francisco Bay watershed restoration efforts and related expenditures for fiscal years 2007 through 2016; (2) how effectively and through what means are Federal and other entities coordinating their San Francisco Bay watershed restoration efforts; (3) extent to which Federal and other entities have developed measurable goals and assessed progress for San Francisco Bay watershed restoration efforts; and (4) stakeholder views on factors that may affect or limit the San Francisco Bay watershed restoration progress.

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Compliance (Job Code 101411) – May 25, 2017, with the Departmental FOIA Officer.** Per request from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, and Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, GAO will: (1) determine the extent to which selected agencies have implemented certain FOIA requirements, including methods to reduce backlogged requests, and policies to allow non-custodians to respond to Congressional and FOIA requests; (2) identify the use of statutory exemption (b) (3) as the basis for redacting records; (3) determine if any FOIA requests were received and processed by agencies related to entities that received assistance under Title 1 of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008; and (4) determine the number of times court decisions about agencies' improper withholding of records resulted in administrative actions against responsible agency personnel.

### **GAO Exit Conference/Pending Reports**

**Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Coordination (Job Code 100758) – May 25, 2017, with BOR staff.** Per request from Ranking Member Grace Napolitano, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives; Jared Huffman, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives; and Paul Tonko, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives, GAO reviewed: (1) which agencies provide funding for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure and the role they play in meeting drinking water

and wastewater infrastructure needs; (2) how Federal agencies identify drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs; and (3) Federal agency coordination of efforts to address drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

### **Recent Final GAO Reports**

**Avian Influenza: USDA Has Taken Actions to Reduce Risks but Needs a Plan to Evaluate Its Efforts (GAO-17-360).** GAO issued the final report May 11, 2017, and recommends that USDA develop a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the corrective actions it has taken. No recommendations and further action is required of the Department.

### **Recent Draft OIG Reports**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Grants Awarded to the State of Maryland, Department of Natural Resources From July 1, 2013 Through June 30, 2015 (2016-EXT-003).** The OIG audited costs claimed by the State of Maryland (State), Department of Natural Resources under grants awarded by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). FWS provided the grants to the State under the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (Program). The audit included claims totaling \$33.2 million on 44 grants that were open during the State fiscal years that ended June 30, 2014 and June 30, 2015. The audit also covered the State's compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and FWS guidelines, including those related to the collection and use of hunting and fishing license revenues and the reporting of program income. The OIG questioned costs totaling \$66,617, including out-of-period costs. The OIG determined that the Department had not reported all program income and incorrectly reported the correct number of unique license holders on the annual hunting license certifications. The OIG also found that conditions identified in previous audits regarding in-kind volunteer time and real property continue to exist. The OIG issued the draft report May 12, 2017, with eight recommendations to FWS, including three repeat recommendations which will be tracked under the resolution process for the prior audit(s). The response is due June 26.

### **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

On June 5, USGS will announce a new paper finding that westward ice drift has increased in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas, causing polar bears to expend more energy walking eastward on a faster moving "treadmill" of sea ice. USGS and University of Wyoming scientists evaluated the behavioral and energetic consequences to the bears from the changing sea ice drift. The energetic costs to polar bears contending with faster ice drift are happening at the same time the bears are contending with rapid and expansive ice melt during summer that reduces their ability to hunt seals and creates a complex environment of ice and water that is more difficult to travel across. The paper will be published in *Global Change Biology*, and a news release is planned.

**June 5-8: Central Valley Project Tour for Acting Commissioner Mikkelsen (CA):** Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region is planning a tour of Central Valley Project facilities for Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen. The tour is tentatively scheduled June 5-8.

**June 12: Secretary to Host Call with Colorado River Basin States:** On June 12, Secretary

Zinke will host a call with the seven Colorado River Basin States. The primary purpose of the call will be to meet and greet, and establish a working relationship with the Basin States Governors representatives in his role as Watermaster of the Lower Colorado River Basin.

In early June, USGS and partners will use nutrient load data and modeling to forecast the size of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico this year. For years, the USGS has partnered with NOAA and other organizations to estimate the size of the area of low to no oxygen in the Gulf of Mexico. The actual size of the dead zone will be announced in early August.

**June 26-28: Multi-Agency National Invasive Species Council Meeting (MT):** From June 26-28, Special Assistant to the Secretary Scott Cameron and Reclamation will participate in a meeting sponsored by the National Invasive Species Council (NISC). The meeting will be held concurrent with the June 26-28 Western Governors' Association Meeting in Whitefish, MT. Several DOI agencies and the DOI Office of Policy Analysis will also participate. The meeting aims to integrate policy among federal and state (and possibly tribal) partners that will improve the prevention, eradication, and containment of aquatic invasive species in the Pacific Northwest. In addition, the group will study ways to reduce the risk of zebra/quagga mussel introduction into the Columbia River Basin.

**June 28: Cameron and Mikkelsen to Testify on Reclamation Budget:** On June 28, Special Assistant to the Secretary Scott Cameron and Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen will testify before the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Committee, in a joint hearing with the Army Corps of Engineers, on the Bureau of Reclamation's fiscal year 2018 budget.

**June: Funding Opportunity Posted for Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act Section 4009:** In June, Reclamation will post a funding opportunity seeking proposals for projects under WIIN Section 4009. The Act provides a path for new desalination and water recycling projects to become eligible to compete for federal funding under a competitive process. Projects are eligible if the project sponsor has a Reclamation-reviewed desalination or water recycling feasibility study and Reclamation has notified Congress stating the feasibility study meets Reclamation's requirements. Reclamation is planning on notifying Congress in May.

In June, FEMA will release a report on estimated annual losses from earthquakes in the United States. USGS science on earthquake hazards was a critical component to this analysis. The report concludes that earthquakes are estimated to cost the nation \$6.1 billion annually in building stock losses. The last report was published in 2008, and the new estimate incorporates the most recent USGS earthquake hazard maps. USGS will work with FEMA on coordinated outreach on the report.

**By the end of June: Reclamation Announces Winners for Stage I of the Arsenic Sensor Challenge:** By the end of June, Reclamation will announce the selected ideas for the Arsenic Sensor Challenge that sought ideas for a rapid, low-cost monitoring of arsenic that would benefit water treatment plant operations, wastewater monitoring, contaminated site remediation, private well owners, scientific research and other interested parties.

**July 6-7: Congressman Costa's Northern California Tour (CA):** On July 6-7, Congressman Jim Costa is planning to visit the Bureau of Reclamation's Shasta Dam, Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project, the sites reservoir location and the state of California' Oroville Dam. More information to come.

In the coming weeks, the Department will release a new USGS report on critical minerals for the United States. This publication presents resource and geologic information for 23 mineral commodities currently viewed as important to our national economy and national security, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. The report provides an in-depth look at each commodity's use, distribution of deposit types, and current status of production, resources, and reserves. The individual commodity chapters serve as an update to the 1973 commodity chapters of USGS Professional Paper 820, United States Mineral Resources. A DOI news release is planned.

In the coming weeks, USGS will announce a new update report on Pacific walrus demographics. USGS walrus research has focused on demographics, habitat use, sea ice projections, and energetics, and this update will add to this body of knowledge by providing the results of a population dynamics model that synthesizes population size, age structure, reproductive rates, and harvest for the period 1974-2015. The research, conducted in collaboration with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the USFWS, shows that the walrus population has halved in that amount of time. However, the population decline lessened over time, and the odds that the population is still decreasing are roughly equal to the odds that it is stationary or possibly increasing. By September 30, USFWS is required to make a listing decision on the Pacific walrus. The USGS role is to provide objective science to help inform the decision. The findings will be published in *Marine Mammal Science* and a news release is planned.

In the coming weeks, USGS will announce a new assessment of undiscovered potash resources of the Pripyat Basin of Belarus and the Dnieper-Donets Basin of Ukraine. The study was undertaken because potash is a critical mineral resource for agricultural production, and these deposits are in a geopolitically sensitive area of interest. A technical announcement is planned.